

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

A complete listing of the claims is as follows:

Claim 1. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear comprising:

an upper;

a bottom assembly including at least one wear sole and at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly, said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly including a first reinforcement element, said first reinforcement element extending in a longitudinal direction;

at least one element for reinforcing said upper, said at least one element for reinforcing said upper including a second reinforcement element;

a flexible coupling comprising a shock-absorbing intermediary sole situated between at least said first reinforcement element and at least said second reinforcement element, said first reinforcement element and said second reinforcement element extending beneath said intermediary sole being flexible at least in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction, said first reinforcement element and said second reinforcement element being coupled together via said intermediary sole.

Claim 2. (*Canceled*)

Claim 3. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly and each of said at least one element for reinforcing said upper is assembled to said intermediary sole with adhesive.

Claim 4. (*Original*) An article of footwear according to claim 3, wherein:

said intermediary sole comprises EVA.

Claim 5. (*Original*) An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:

said element for reinforcing said upper is also coupled to said upper.

Claim 6. (*Original*) An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:

said element for reinforcing said upper comprises at least one portion extending around an area adapted to surround a rear area of a wearer's foot.

Claim 7. (*Original*) An article of footwear according to claim 5, wherein:

said element for reinforcing said upper comprises a medial arm extending along a medial side of a rear area of a wearer's foot and a lateral arm extending along a lateral side of said rear area of the wearer's foot.

Claim 8. (*Original*) An article of footwear according to claim 7, wherein:

said medial and lateral arms of said element for reinforcing said upper are associated, respectively, with medial and lateral portions, of said element for reinforcing said bottom assembly.

Claim 9. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 8, wherein:

said elements for reinforcing said upper and bottom assembly have asymmetrical shapes with respect to said medial and lateral sides, thereby providing asymmetrical reinforcement of said upper and bottom assemblies with respect to said medial and lateral sides.

Claim 10. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:

said intermediary sole comprises surface depressions; and  
said first and second reinforcement elements are assembled to said surface depressions of said intermediary sole.

Claim 11. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 10, wherein:

said first and second reinforcement elements are spaced apart.

Claim 12. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 10, wherein:

said first and second reinforcement elements are spaced apart at least in a plantar arch zone of said bottom assembly.

Claim 13. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear comprising:

an upper;

a bottom assembly including at least one wear sole and at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly, said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly including a first reinforcement element, said first reinforcement element extending in a longitudinal direction, said first and second reinforcement elements being spaced apart at least in a plantar arch zone of said bottom assembly by no more than 5 millimeters;

at least one element for reinforcing said upper, said at least one element for reinforcing said upper including a second reinforcement element;

a flexible coupling comprising a shock-absorbing intermediary sole having surface depressions, said intermediary sole being situated between at least said first reinforcement element and at least said second reinforcement element, said intermediary sole being flexible at least in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction;

said first reinforcement element and said second reinforcement element being coupled together via said intermediary sole by way of said first and second reinforcement elements being assembled to said surface depressions of said intermediary sole.

Claim 14. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 10, wherein:

said first and second reinforcement elements are assembled to said surface depressions of said intermediary sole with adhesive.

Claim 15. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:

said intermediary sole comprises surface depressions; and

said first and second reinforcement elements are assembled to said surface depressions of said intermediary sole with adhesive, leaving a clearance between said first and second reinforcements elements at least in a plantar arch zone of the bottom assembly.

Claim 16. (*Currently Amended*) An article of footwear comprising:

an upper;

a bottom assembly including at least one wear sole and at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly, said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly including a first reinforcement element, said first reinforcement element extending in a longitudinal direction;

at least one element for reinforcing said upper, said at least one element for reinforcing said upper including a second reinforcement element;

a flexible coupling comprising a shock-absorbing intermediary sole situated between at least said first reinforcement element and at least said second reinforcement element, said intermediary sole being flexible at least in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction, said first reinforcement element and said second reinforcement element being coupled together via said intermediary sole;

said second reinforcement element encircling a rear end of said upper and extending forwardly in the form of medial and lateral returns;

each of said returns of said second reinforcement element extending transversely in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction toward a respective edge of said first reinforcement element, leaving a clearance with said first reinforcement element.

Claim 17. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 16, wherein:

said clearance between said medial return and said first reinforcement element is no greater than 5 millimeters; and

said clearance between said lateral return and said first reinforcement element is no greater than 5 millimeters.

Claim 18. (*Currently Amended*) An article of footwear comprising:

a bottom assembly including at least one wear sole and at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly, said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly comprising a longitudinally extending first reinforcement element;

an upper mounted on said bottom assembly;

at least one element for reinforcing said upper, said at least one element for reinforcing said upper comprising a second reinforcement element;

an intermediary sole comprising a shock-absorbing material extending from a heel area of said bottom assembly to a toe area of said bottom assembly;

said first and second reinforcement elements being separately attached to said intermediary sole with adhesive;

said second reinforcement element extending around a rear of said upper and a rear of said bottom assembly, and extending forwardly in the form of medial and lateral returns;

each of said returns of said second reinforcement element extending transversely in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction toward a respective edge of said first reinforcement element, leaving a clearance with said first reinforcement element.

Claim 19. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear comprising:

a bottom assembly including at least one wear sole and at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly, said at least one element for reinforcing said bottom assembly comprising a longitudinally extending first reinforcement element;

an upper mounted on said bottom assembly;

at least one element for reinforcing said upper, said at least one element for reinforcing said upper comprising a second reinforcement element;

an intermediary sole comprising a shock-absorbing material extending from a heel area of said bottom assembly to a toe area of said bottom assembly;

said first and second reinforcement elements being separately attached to said intermediary sole with adhesive;

said second reinforcement element extending around a rear of said upper and a rear of said bottom assembly, and extending forwardly in the form of medial and lateral returns;

each of said returns of said second reinforcement element extending transversely toward a respective edge of said first reinforcement element, leaving a clearance with said first reinforcement element;

said clearance between said medial return and said first reinforcement element is no greater than 5 millimeters; and

said clearance between said lateral return and said first reinforcement element is no greater than 5 millimeters.

Claim 20. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 19, wherein:

said intermediary sole has depressions for receiving said first and second reinforcement elements, said first and second reinforcement elements being attached to said intermediary sole in said depressions with adhesive.

Claim 21. (*Previously Presented*) An article of footwear according to claim 18,  
wherein:

said first reinforcement element and said second reinforcement  
element extend beneath said intermediary sole.